

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

With entry of this Amendment, claims 1-9, 11-17, 21-35, and 37-41 are pending in the instant application. Claims 10, 18-20, and 36 have been canceled herein without prejudice.

Objections to the Drawings

Figures 10-11 were objected to as being informal. Applicants submit herewith formal drawings for Figures 10A, 10B, 11A, and 11B as replacement drawings for those figures to overcome the Examiner's objection to those figures.

Objection to claims 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. Section 112

Claims 16 and 17 were objected to for lack of proper antecedence. As suggested by the Examiner, claims 16 and 17 have been amended herein to depend from claim 15 for proper antecedence. In addition, claims 11-13, 21, 23, 29, and 34 have been amended herein to now depend from claim 1 rather than original dependent claim 10 which has been canceled herein.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. Sections 102 and 103

Claims 1, 4-6, 10, 12, 15-18, 21, 24, 27, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Lancaster U.S. Patent No. 3,650,306 ("Lancaster"). Claims 2, 3, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Lancaster. Claims 1, 4-5, 10, 18-19, 24-25, 27, 29 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Carl U.S. Patent No. 5,497,670 ("Carl"). Claims 2-3, 7-9, 11-17, 28 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Carl. Claims 1, 2, 4-5, 15-19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, and 34-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Maeda U.S. Patent No. 6,589,483 ("Maeda"). Claims 3, 7-14, 28 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Maeda.

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 37-41 were allowed. Applicants also note that claims 20, 22, and 30-33 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In order to

expedite the instant application to allowance and issuance, Applicants have amended the claims herein to place them in condition for allowance. Specifically, independent claim 1 has been amended to include all the limitations of allowable claim 20 and its intervening claims 19, 18 and 10, and thus claim 1, and its dependent claims 2-9, 11-17, 21, 23-29, and 31-35 should now be allowable. In addition, allowable dependent claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of its base claim 1 and its intervening claims 21 and 10, and thus independent claim 22 should now be allowable as well. Further, allowable dependent claim 30 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of its base claim 1 and its intervening claims 29 and 10, and thus should also now be allowable. Finally, allowed independent claims 37 and 40, as well as dependent claims 24 and 31-33, have been amended herein to correct for some minor informalities, which amendments present no new matter.

It should be noted that the cancellation, abandonment or amendment of any claim or any amendment in the description does not amount to abandonment of any subject matter in the application and upon any such cancellation, abandonment or amendment the right to file one or more continuing applications in respect of any subject matter in the application as filed is maintained.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned at (650) 623-0667.

Respectfully submitted,



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